

Victim Impact Statement

Victim's Name: Edward Tobin

Police Service: RCMP

Offence Date: 2028/04/06 Offense Location: HWY 335 and 35 Intersection near Armley

Incident/File Number 2018-446743

That which has been taken, cannot be returned. What was done, cannot be undone. While my mind knows this to be true, my heart and soul are most reluctant to accept the events that have occurred since April 6th.

Parker brought joy into our lives from the moment he entered this world. Even as a little kid, when he got mad or frustrated, he would say or do things that made us laugh. As he got older a few character traits became evident. Parker had a vivid imagination and he loved stories and being read to. He couldn't wait to learn how to read and he did well in school right from the start. One of the things that became evident about Parker early on as well was his ability to show kindness. When we talked to his teachers, their first comments weren't typically about his academic success but rather about how he was so helpful to his classmates and how grateful they were for his assistance.

This was from his Grade 4 teacher: " It has been a wonderful year with Parker in our class. I appreciate the positive attitude that Parker brings to our class and the contributions he gives to our classroom community. Parker is always there to lend a helping hand , which I greatly appreciate. He is respectful, polite and a great asset to our class. Parker is a wonderful leader for his classmates and models positive behaviour on a daily basis. His love of sports and competitive nature shines through in his physical activities."

This one is from Grade 7: " Parker is a welcoming, kind and helpful student who often encourages and compliments others. Parker shows concern for the welfare of others in the classroom and within the school. Parker actively takes on a leadership role in our classroom and is a positive influence on his peers. Parker demonstrates to me that he understands that there is always a choice made for the behaviours he exhibits and how his behaviours affect others."

As a parent you can't help but feel proud to hear and read such wonderful things about your child. His self confidence and positive outlook was often infectious which is why his family and friends hold him so dearly in their hearts.

Parker continued to take on leadership roles as he grew up. In Grade 9 he won a gold medal at a public speaking contest. Along with his friend Brandon, he became interested in the broadcasting side of hockey. Together the boys would organize the music, announcing and social media for the local junior B and senior hockey teams in Stony Plain.

Parker's first year of junior hockey took him away from home to Drayton Valley - just over an hours drive south-west of town. While we missed him being away from home, we were able to make most home games and road games to the neighbouring communities. That meant, we never really went that long without seeing him.

I feel it was during this year that Parker realized his true goal in hockey, an NCAA scholarship. He started working harder than ever before and his play improved accordingly. He was awarded the Top Playoff Performer by his team despite losing 3 straight games in the first round.

We were thrilled when he was traded to neighbouring Spruce Grove during the summer as he would be living back at home. However, the November trade to Humboldt was unexpected and upsetting. I remember telling him that he didn't have to go. He could just walk away and start school at the U of A or another institution. But no, he was determined to keep playing. He knew some guys on the team, including Tyler Smith whom he had played with the previous 2 seasons. After talking with some of the guys, he was encouraged to at least go check it out.

I'll never forget the day he drove out to Humboldt. My stomach tossed all day as I worried about him driving. It was by far the furthest he had ever driven. Fortunately the weather cooperated and we were so relieved when he texted to say that he had arrived.

I feel it is important for people to know that after a few nervous days upon arrival, Parker enjoyed his time in Humboldt tremendously. The boys on the team accepted him right away and he frequently commented on how close the team was and how well everyone got along. He started to quickly develop new friendships with his teammates.

What really impressed Parker about playing in Humboldt was the community connections. As the season went on, our conversations seemed to focus less and less on hockey and more about what was happening with chapel and what Pastor Shawn had planned. He had made a real connection with his billet family and was thrilled to help Paul and Nancy with their church activities.

We travelled twice to Humboldt to watch him play. The last time was for game 5 of the Melfort playoff series. Since they clinched the series that night, they had the next day off. We hung out at the hotel, went to a movie and then had supper. The next morning we met for breakfast. We hugged, said our love-yous and goodbyes. This would be the last time we saw Parker alive and in person.

On April 5th, I sent a text message to Parker wishing him the all the best in the game and he replied, "Thanks dad". That would be our last communication. On April 6th, I arrived home from work as usual, got ready and took the dog for walk before the game. I arrived back home to find my wife at the door in tears. My life has not been the same since.

It's difficult to explain the emotional pain and suffering that the loss of Parker has brought upon us. At times the grief has been overwhelming and you're not sure how you are going to make it through the day. The grief is often triggered by things you wouldn't expect - like seeing young kids playing at the local park. Those simple things that bring back his childhood memories. You smile for a moment as you remember a happier time, then collapse as you realize there will be no new memories. This emotional rollercoaster often leaves you exhausted at the end of the day. You hope for a good night's sleep, but it never seems to come.

I decided to retire early from my career as a teacher. I simply don't have the energy. My work involved a commute of about 1 hour and driving has been difficult since Parker's passing. My mind wanders or sometimes a song on the radio will trigger a flood of emotions.

Parker's death has had an impact on so many people. I worry about all our family and friends that have been affected by this horrific event. I worry about our son Kaiden, Parker's older brother and how his life will be affected as we all try to move forward. There are so many unknowns still.

People often ask how we are doing and say that they hope in time we are able to get over it. I tell them that I don't think it's about getting over it as I don't feel that will ever happen. Rather, it's more about acceptance. I have to accept what has happened. Accept that our lives will continue while Parker's will not and somehow through that acceptance find peace. Perhaps today will bring me one step closer to that place. Thank-you.

I would like to present my statement in court.

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in the statement is true.

Dated this 20th day of January 2019, at Stony Plain

Edward Tobin